

Agassiz Peatland Provincial Nature Reserve Interim Management Statement

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Ontario

**Ministry of
Natural
Resources**

**Hon. Vincent G. Kerrio
Minister**

**Mary Mogford
Deputy Minister**



January, 1986

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL STATEMENT

This Interim Management Statement will provide interim direction for the management of the Agassiz Peatland Provincial Nature Reserve Park until a comprehensive Park Management Plan is prepared.

This statement will provide the basis for the subsequent preparation of the Park Management Plan.

I am pleased to approve this Interim Management Statement for the Agassiz Peatland Provincial Nature Reserve.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. R. Johnston".

D. R. Johnston
Regional Director
Northwestern Region

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Interim Management Statement is to identify:

- i) park values which are to be protected;
- ii) resource management prescriptions necessary to protect these values; and
- iii) restrictions on use of natural resources within the park.

This Interim Management Statement is not intended to replace a Park Management Plan. Rather it is intended to guide the use of natural resources and related activities within the park until such a time as a Park Management Plan is prepared.

The guidelines that have been developed are based on information contained in the Fort Frances District Land Use Guidelines.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NAME: Agassiz Peatland Provincial Nature Reserve	REGIONAL SETTING MAP
PROPOSED CLASS: Nature Reserve	
M.N.R. DISTRICT: Fort Frances	
M.N.R. REGION: Northwestern	
TOTAL AREA(ha): 2315 ha. LAND: WATER:	
SITE REGION: 5S-Lake of the Woods	
SITE DISTRICT: 5S-2	
DATE in REGULATION: 85.02.14	

TARGETS

1 LIFE SCIENCE REPRESENTATION

site type/landscape unit	species/communities
Landscape Unit 31 - Rainy River Clay Plain	- very weakly broken plain of deep to shallow peat overlying sand and clay - string patterned fen, water tracks, and Townsend's jackrabbit

2 EARTH SCIENCE REPRESENTATION

geological theme	feature
N/A	N/A

3 CULTURAL RESOURCE REPRESENTATION

theme	theme segment
Unknown	Unknown

4 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

day use	car camping	wilderness/back country
N/A	N/A	N/A

INVENTORIES

level	type	earth science	life science	cultural	recreational	other
reconnaissance			1978			
completion date						
detailed						
completion date						
required?		N/A	yes	N/A	N/A	

DATE _____

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

I LAND TENURE

There are presently no forms of alienated land tenure within the park boundary.

Guideline

Requests for any form of land tenure will not be considered.

II LAND ACQUISITION/DISPOSITION

There are no patented properties located within the park boundary. The park is however, largely surrounded by patented property.

Guidelines

The Ministry of Natural Resources will not actively seek to acquire additional patented property pending the completion of the park management plan.

The Ministry will attempt to influence the use of private land adjacent to the park when such uses are considered significant to the management of the park.

No further disposition of Crown-owned lands will be considered.

III EXISTING/PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

There are no existing facilities or developments within the park.

Guideline

Proposals for park development will not be considered pending the completion of the park management plan. Park development will be limited to trails, necessary signage and interpretive facilities for research and educational purposes.

IV RECREATION ACTIVITIES

The only recreational activities that presently occur within the park area are a limited amount of sport hunting and to a lesser extent, wildlife viewing.

Guideline

The above mentioned recreational activities will be permitted to continue.

V COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

A portion of one trapline is included within the park boundary.

A small amount of timber has been harvested in the past from isolated patches within the park.

The small, shallow lake (Mud Lake) within the park is heavily fished for bait by one licensee.

Guidelines

Trapping on the existing trapline will be permitted to continue within the park area. Proposals for trapline cabins will not be considered.

Timber harvesting will not be permitted in the park.

Commercial bait fishing operations will be permitted to continue in the park.

Mineral exploration/extraction will be permitted to continue as per the Fort Frances District Land Use Guidelines. This activity will only be authorized by the issuance of an Exploratory Licence of Occupation under Section 190 of the Mining Act.

Aggregate extraction and the extraction of peat will not be permitted within the park.

VI NATIVE INTERESTS

There are no known Native interests in the park area. However, a portion of land was excluded from the park because it is presently part of a Native land claim by the Rainy River Band. This parcel of land is described as Lot 3, Concession 2 of Spohn Township which is part of Wildland Indian Reserve #15M. These lands were surrendered by the Rainy River Band in 1915 and are now the subject of a land claim by the band.

Guideline

The park boundary should be amended to include Lot 3, Con. 2 - Spohn Twp. when this Native land claim is settled.

VII NATURAL RESOURCES

A number of natural resource values have been identified to date through the life science inventory. These life science values include a minerotrophic patterned fen supporting string fen and fen pools. Management efforts will be directed towards the maintenance and protection of these features.

VIII CULTURAL RESOURCES

No known cultural resources have been identified to date.

IX CLIENT SERVICES

Information on the earth and life science values of this nature reserve will be made available to the public in an attempt to foster an understanding and appreciation for this park.

X RESEARCH

A more detailed earth life science inventory will be necessary prior to the preparation of the park management plan.

XI MARKETING

A marketing strategy for this nature reserve class provincial park will be addressed during the preparation of the park management plan.

SOURCES/REFERENCES

NOBLE, T., Ontario Nature Reserves Program - Life Science Inventory
Check-Sheet for Blue Township Minerotrophic Peatland ,
O.M.N.R., 1978.

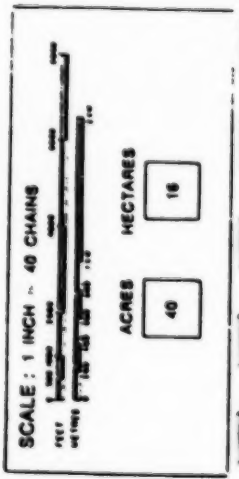
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Fort Frances District Land
Use Guidelines , 1983.



WILDLANDS INDIAN RESERVE
#15M

TOWNSHIP MAPS: SPOHN M 2121
PRATT M 2110

AGASSIZ PEATLAND
PROVINCIAL NATURE RESERVE



5. BLUE TOWNSHIP PEATLAND

a. Area Description

Blue Township Peatland comprises a block of land approximately 1600 hectares in size which straddles the Pratt/Spohn Township line. The area presently produces commercial fur from resident trapping licences. The single small lake is intensively bait fished. The area is part of the Rainy River Crown Management Unit. Hunting for deer and small game also takes place. Somewhat more than half of the area has moderate mineral potential. Peat potential is high and aggregate potential is low.

Area 5 supports no permanent dwellings and is presently inaccessible by road. One private land holding is located in the area.

b. Land Use Intent

The area is recommended for park status. This will provide representation of the swamp, bog and fen communities within Landscape Unit 31 (Rainy River Clay Plain). Boundaries of the candidate area have been revised so as to exclude lands of significant agricultural potential where these are located adjacent to areas presently being farmed.

c. Land Use Activity For Area No. 5—BLUE TOWNSHIP PEATLAND

In consideration of existing land uses within the area it is further recommended that most of these uses be permitted to continue. The exception to this would be commercial logging which is not recommended as a continuing use. An outline of those ongoing activities which are recommended for continuation is given in the Land Use Activity section, however it must be realized that further refinement of these recommendations may be required in some instances.

The Land Use Activity section also provides guidelines for how the Ministry will attempt to influence the use of private lands located within the recommended candidate. These guidelines could be refined as more information is gathered concerning the contribution of these lands towards meeting park objectives.

Until such time as the area is established as a park, it will be managed essentially as Crown lands with private land inholdings. Traditional uses of the area will be permitted to continue provided they do not jeopardize long term park objectives, or impact on known park values to the significant detriment of their value once the park is created.

Activity	Acceptable		Recommended Guidelines
	Yes	No	
Aggregate Extraction		x	
Agriculture		x	
Bait Fishing	x		It is recommended that existing bait fishing operations be permitted to continue.
Commercial Fishing		x	
Cottaging		x	
Hunting	x		It is recommended that existing hunting activities be permitted to continue.
Forestry		x	
Mining	x		It is recommended that mineral exploration/extraction be permitted to continue.
Provincial Parks	x		Recommended for park status.

Activity	Acceptable		Recommended Guidelines
	Yes	No	
Roads		x	
Rural Residential		x	
Sport Fishing		x	
Tourism		x	
Trapping	x		It is recommended that existing trapping activities be permitted to continue.
Wildlife Viewing	x		
Wild Rice Harvesting		x	
Urban Development		x	

ONTARIO NATURE RESERVES PROGRAM - LIFE SCIENCE INVENTORY CHECK-SHEET

NAME Blue Twp. Minerotrophic Peatland		MAP NAME McInnis Creek	MAP NUMBER 52D/15	UTM REF. 890100
COUNTY, DISTRICT or REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY Rainy River District		LAT. 48° 50' N	LONG. 94° 30' W	ALT. MIN. MAX. 1090 ft. 1110 ft.
LOCALITY Rainy River		1:50,000 N.T.S. MAP SHOWING AREA BOUNDARIES 1:250,000		
TOWNSHIP	LOTS	CONCESSIONS		
Blue				
Spohn				
Curran				
Wild Land Reserve				
Pratt				
AREA	acres	6500 ha		
OWNERSHIP Crown				
ADMINISTRATION Ministry of Natural Resources				
FOREST REGION AND DISTRICT L. 12-Rainy River		SITE REGION AND DISTRICT 5S-2		
WMA REGION AND DISTRICT NWR-Fort Frances		CONSERVATION AUTHORITY		
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS				
BASE MAP:				
YEAR	ROLL	FLIGHT LINE	NUMBERS	
1965	38	4834		

PHYSICAL AND BIOLOGICAL FEATURES

The Blue Township Minerotrophic Peatland is a small portion of an extensive, nearly continuous peatland area found in the bed of former Glacial Lake Agassiz in the Rainy River area of Ontario, the northwestern corner of the State of Minnesota and the southeastern corner of Manitoba. This large area of peatland is a distinct biophysio-graphic unit supporting "a remarkable variety of swamp, bog and fen types which include floristically rich forested swamps, bogs supporting productive black spruce-feather moss forests, poor black spruce muskegs, string bogs, patterned fens, and fields of regularly spaced forest 'islands'" (Heinselman, 1963).

The Blue Township Peatland was identified under the International Biological Program (1975). The peatland is located in portions of Blue, Spohn, Curran, Pratt Townships, and the Wild Land Reserve.

This peatland is of exceptional interest for its size and representational value reflecting peatland formation in this portion of Canada and the United States. It exhibits excellent examples of minerotrophic patterned fen occupying large water tracks. This pattern includes string fen and fen pools. Numerous vegetation associations are found here as well.

DATA SHEETS ATTACHED		SUMMARY SPECIES LISTS		MAJOR INFORMATION SOURCES	
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	☒			I.B.P., 1975, Ian MacDonald	
VEGETATION SUMMARY	☒	PHYSICAL FEATURES MAP	☐	Mollard, J.D., 1974. Landforms and Surface	
EVALUATION SHEET	☒	VEGETATION MAP	☐	Material of Canada: A stereoscopic Atlas and	
COMMUNITY DESCRS.	☐	BIBLIOGRAPHY	☐	Glossary 4th ed.	
COMMUNITY COMB. LISTS	☐	PHOTOGRAPHS	☐		

EVALUATION AND PRIORITIES

This unit has potential as a candidate nature reserve.

DATE COMPILED November 27, 1978	COMPILED BY T. Noble
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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

52D/15

890100

BEDROCK**PHYSIOGRAPHY**

The area consists of a very weakly broken plain of deep to shallow peat overlying sand and clay.

SOILS

Soils are organic with the exception of occasional occurrences of sand which occur as islands in a sea of peat.

GROUNDWATER

Groundwater conditions on the few sand sites are wet mesic while the organic sites range from wet mesic to open water.

SURFACE WATER

Surface water consists of small pools associated with the patterned fen found in the water tracks. The largest water body found here is a small circular lake in the central area of this peatland complex.

SHORES**CLIMATE**

The ecoclimate of this organic plain is colder than normal.

DISTURBANCE HISTORY

Drainage ditches have been constructed at various locations. These have no doubt affected the normal hydrology of this peatland to some extent. In addition, Highways 600 and 621 both cross the peatland in north-south direction disrupting normal drainage. For this reason, the boundary shown on the front page only includes that portion of the peatland between the two highways.

VEGETATION SUMMARY

52D/15

890100

NUMBER	ASSOCIATION OR COMPLEX	AREA (ha)	SOIL TEXTURE	MOISTURE REGIME	MICRO- CLIMATE	SOIL pH	DATA SHEET
1.	2I22 (open broad-leaved seasonal submerged meadow) - no information			open water			
2.	1A22 (closed deciduous swamp forest) (<u>Larix-Betula glandulifera-Cornus</u>)		organic	wet			
3.	1A17a (closed evergreen forest <u>Picea-Ledum-Chamaedaphae-Sphagnum</u>)		organic	wet/wet mesic			
4.	1A17a (closed evergreen forest) <u>Betula glandulifera-Larix-Picea-Ledum</u>		organic	very wet			
5.	1M22 (seasonal shortgrass marsh) <u>Carex lasiocarpa-Rhynchospora-Scorpidium</u>		organic	saturated			
6.	1M22 (seasonal shortgrass marsh) <u>Sphagnum-Vaccinium-Carex-Rubus</u>		organic	very wet peat			
7.	1L21 (seasonal orthophyll tall grass) <u>Phragmites-Carex-Sphagnum</u>		organic	very wet peat			
8.	1A17a (closed evergreen forest) <u>Larix-Picea-Betula-Sphagnum-Salix</u>		organic	wet peat			
9.	1B22 (deciduous shrub swamp) <u>Betula glandulifera-Larix-Andromeda- Rhamnus</u>		organic	wet/very wet			
10.	1B22 (deciduous shrub swamp) <u>Alnus-Thuja-Betula-Salix</u>		organic	wet			
11.	1B22 (deciduous shrub swamp) <u>Alnus-Salix-Carex</u>		organic /sand	wet			
12.	1A21 (closed deciduous forest) <u>Populus-Abies-Acer</u>		sand	mesic/ wet mesic			
13.	1N21 (seasonal broad-leaved herb meadow) - old field patterns.		sand	mesic			

EVALUATION

52D/15

890100

OUTSTANDING ASSOCIATIONS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES OR FEATURES

- excellent and extensive string patterned fen with pools
- Townsend's jackrabbit or white-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus townsendii*), a prairie species is found here, apparently the only known site in the province.
- water tracks
- Mollard, J.D., 1973. describes this feature as an extensive patterned peatland complex exhibiting radiating flow patterns which indicate the direction of surface runoff and ground water flow. Other features include patterned (ribbed) fen and "teardrop" spruce islands.

POTENTIAL DISTURBANCES AND THREATS

The hydrology of the area is being affected by drainage ditch construction; generally unexploited as yet (I.B.P.1975)

BRIEF SUMMARY

RECOMMENDATIONS

This peatland deserves more detailed study in order to adequately describe vegetative patterns and processes that occur here.

FIELD NOTES

FIELD NO.: 8-10 NWR

DATE: 1980.08.28

AREA NAME: Blue Twp. Peatland

LOCATION: 52D/16 (Arbor Vitae), 914067

FEATURE: Minerotrophic Peatland

ABIOTIC COMPONENTS - SLOPE - level

ASPECT -

MICROCLIMATE - colder than normal

DRAINAGE - poor, internal

SUBSTRATE - peat

BIOTIC COMPONENTS - VEGETATION COMPOSITION BY STRATUM:

A) TREE - treed 'bog' to closed canopy
Sb, L, Ce.

B) SHRUB - Ce, L, Salix sp., Betula pumila, Alnus rugosa,
Cornus stolonifera, Ribes sp., Ledum groenlandicum,
Andromeda glaucophylla, Chamaedaphne calyculata.

C) HERB - Vaccinium vitis-idaea, Smilacina trifolia, Iris
versicolor, Viola sp., Parnassia glauca, Gentiana
clausa (?), Carex spp., Dryopteris sp., Rubus
pubescens, Rumex sp., Cyrtopodium reginae, Campanula
parinoides, Potentilla palustris, Eupatorium maculatum.

D) BRYOID Sphagnum as carpet and hummocks.

- FAUNAL NOTES -

INCIDENTAL NOTES - Some logging for Ce and Sb. Also evidence of fire.

PRATT/SPOHN MINerotrophic FEN 525/15, 900140

600

Gravel Pit

McCROSSON TP
PRATT TP

VI

V

IV

III

II

I

PRATT TP
BLUE TP

86

87

88

89

7

I

23

31

31

32

525/15 525/16

2982.8 ha
7370.4 ac.

